

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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Pedagogical Aspects of Soviet Secondary Schools

1. [redacted] the ten-year school located on Gorodomlya Island [redacted] 25X1  
 [redacted] All classes were conducted on a coeducational basis, as was true of the nearby schools on the mainland. [redacted] this practice was customary throughout the USSR. [redacted] classes were small. [redacted]  
 [redacted] However, it should be noted that Gorodomlya school was by no means typical of Soviet secondary schools. 25X1
2. [redacted] the following subjects at the Gorodomlya school: in the seventh grade - Russian language (literature and grammar); arithmetic, geology, history, biology, a foreign language (German), chemistry and physics, the Soviet constitution, drawing, and gymnastics; in the eighth grade - history of literature, history (Russian history and European history beginning with the English Revolution), algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, anatomy (biology), German, drawing, and gymnastics; ninth grade - the same subjects as in the eighth grade, except that Darwinism was substituted for anatomy, and psychology was added. At the nearby Ostashkov ten-year school on the mainland pupils studied French, German, or English as a foreign language, depending on which teachers were available. There was evidently a shortage of teachers qualified to instruct in foreign languages. 25X1
3. Boys attending the last years of the Ostashkov ten-year school were required to take military training. However, military training was given only during the one or two hours per week set aside for physical education. [redacted] no summer military camps for Soviet boys attending the upper grades of ten-year schools. However, it was true that students at the Ostashkov ten-year school were required to work "voluntarily" in the fields during harvest time. 25X1
4. Textbooks were changed frequently in keeping with the Party line regarding policies, historical events, literary favorites, etc. Some textbooks were still used [redacted] which did not conform to the new Party line in some sections. In such cases, the out-of-date parts were simply crossed out [redacted] 25X1  
 [redacted] Biology was not taught in 1948 as a result of the Lysenko purge. No textbooks containing the new Party doctrine were yet available and biology teachers were required that year to attend special courses on new principles in the field. 25X1
5. [redacted] perhaps half of [redacted] teachers were members of the Communist Party. Some were very young, hardly older than many of the students in the upper grades. To judge from the way they conducted classes, it appeared that all of them were convinced Communists. It is possible that they did not express their true opinions [redacted] 25X1  
 [redacted] 25X1
6. The teaching plan determined specifically how many classroom hours were to be devoted to each course or phase of a course. [redacted] 25X1

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the teachers adhered strictly to this plan. They [ ] emphasizing the learning of facts rather than the ability to think. That is, the memorizing of facts was stressed but no real effort was made to explain the "why" or "how" of this information. They succeeded in this way in covering an enormous range of knowledge, but this knowledge was quickly forgotten. On the other hand, it was true that classroom discussion was permitted, even on political subjects.

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7. The teachers were naturally interested in seeing that their students remained attentive during classroom instruction. Their success as teachers was judged according to the number of students who passed their examinations and entered the next grade. These yearly final examinations were quite difficult and were conducted impartially. The presence of an outside teacher or an examination board from another school during examinations prevented the examining teacher from giving help to weak students.

#### Political Aspects of Soviet Secondary Schools

8. The instruction [ ] was designed to inculcate upon the students a devotion to Communist ideology, the Soviet fatherland, and Stalin. These political aspects [ ] were covered in all courses but were primarily emphasized in courses on literature, history, and the Soviet constitution.
 

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9. Although Russian nationalism was emphasized, it was not done in such a way as to overshadow Communism. Patriotic heroes of Russian history were always treated as forerunners of Communism. Communism and Russian nationalism were coupled together.
10. Soviet claims of priorities in technical innovations and science were increasingly emphasized [ ] particularly in the physical and natural sciences. [ ] teachers usually pointed out that in tsarist times life was so bad that a struggling inventor was never able to obtain recognition for his discoveries. This enabled Westerners to receive unjust recognition for these inventions. In fact, it was true that tsarist Russia was used as an evil standard of comparison even more frequently than Western capitalist nations.
 

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11. Although no opportunity was lost to praise the name and deeds of Stalin, it was true that no established form of Stalin worship was observed [ ] Praise of Stalin was primarily expressed in poems and songs presented in literature courses.
 

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12. Propaganda directed against the United States was particularly strong, but this was generally expressed in terms of the West as a whole and not the United States alone. Anti-American propaganda was usually brought forth in geography classes and in comparing the idyllic conditions in the Soviet Union with life abroad.
13. All of the Soviet teachers [ ] were anti-religious and frequently used the occasion of normal classroom instruction to ridicule religion. There did not seem to be any systematic
 

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attempt on their part to corrupt or combat religious interest, [redacted] However, it is probable that anti-religious instruction was systematically conducted in normal Soviet schools. [redacted]

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#### Social Aspects of Soviet Education

14. Compulsory seven-year education was introduced in the Ostashkov region in the years between 1948 and 1950. All four-year schools in the neighboring rural areas were abolished. [redacted] the present Five-Year Plan calls for the introduction of compulsory ten-year education in the urban centers, but this was certainly not true in Ostashkov or on Gorodcomlya Island.

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15. Entrance into the upper grades of a ten-year school (grades eight to ten) was determined solely by the ability of each individual student. All students were required to pass a difficult examination at the end of the seventh grade in order to proceed further with their education. As with other annual final examinations, a student was passed only if he made a "three" or better in each course examination. If the student received three "two's", he was required to repeat the grade. A student receiving two "two's" could be re-examined in these courses. However, he was forced to wait an entire year to enter the next grade as the examinations were not given until the fall.
16. Entrance into a higher educational institution was conditioned by entrance examinations as well as by the number of applicants competing for acceptance. Each vuz, or higher educational institute, was allowed to accept a limited number of new students each year. These quotas varied considerably from institute to institute. Some vuzy were difficult to enter, some were not, depending on the number of applicants and their respective quotas for first-year students. So it was possible that either all or a very few of the applicants passing their entrance examinations were accepted into a vuz. Unsuccessful applicants who passed the examinations were allowed to take examinations at other higher educational institutions and were given credit for the examinations which they had already passed.

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